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April 14, 2004

VIA FACSIMILE 703-746-8301

Examiner Aaron J. Capron
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Re: Baerlocher U.S. Patent Application No. 09/886,751
For: Slot Table Game Apparatus and Method for Playing Slot-Table Game
Our Ref: 401961

Dear Mr. Capron:

You asked me to fax to you an outline of the issues that we can discuss in the telephone interview presently set for 2:00 p.m. EDST. on Thursday, April 15.

The invention concerns a game having a spin/stop button which is enabled to cause spinning of at least some of the display segments. Thereafter, some of the display segments automatically stop spinning. After some of the display segments automatically stop spinning, a bet may be placed by the players. Thereafter, the spin/stop button is enabled for a second time. Thereafter, the enabled spin/stop button is depressed to cause other of the display segments to stop spinning.

It can be seen that applicant uses a spin/stop button to initially start plurality of reels spinning, thereafter some of the reels will automatically stop, while the others will continue spinning, and thereafter the spin/stop button is used to stop at least some of the others that continue to spin. In this manner, after some of the reels automatically stop spinning, and before the spin/stop button is depressed to stop other of the reels from spinning, all of the players have an opportunity to increase the amount wagered above the initial ante by placing a bet in their corresponding bet areas. While the players are betting, some of the display segments will continue to spin until the player presses the spin/stop button for the second time. The foregoing is novel and unobvious and I would like to discuss how the claims can be put into best form to convey this novel and unobvious method.

I propose the following claims:

ATLANTA BOSTON CHICAGO HOUSTON LOS ANGELES NEW YORK SACRAMENTO SAN FRANCISCO WASHINGTON, D.C. BRUSSELS

fruit skill EP
SEYFARTH ATTORNEYS SHAW LLP

British skill + fruit machine 2191030

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19. A method of playing a game comprising the steps of:

providing a pay line display having a plurality of display segments bearing a predetermined number of indicia;

providing a player's spin/stop button;

enabling a player's spin/stop button for a first time;

depressing the enabled spin/stop button to cause said plurality of display segments to spin;

thereafter automatically causing one or more, but not all, of said plurality of display segments to stop spinning;

thereafter enabling said player's spin/stop button for a second time; and

thereafter depressing the enabled spin/stop button for the second time to cause at least some of the remaining spinning display segments to stop spinning.

20. The method of claim 19 including the step of placing a wager subsequent to the time that some of said plurality of the display segments have automatically stopped spinning but prior to said spin/stop button being enabled for the second time.

The prior art references do not teach the invention.

Takemoto has a number of stop buttons for stopping different reels and once a particular stop button is pressed, the corresponding reel will stop. Takemoto's stop button will not be enabled twice as in our claims, because to stop any of the other reels in Takemoto a different stop button must be pressed.

Further, Takemoto has a separate start switch 108 and a plurality of game stop switches 109. Each of the stop switches 109 corresponds to a column of rotating indicia. There is no switch that controls both starting and stopping of rotation. There is no disclosure of a stop switch that is anything other than for control of a single rotating reel.

Okada discloses a single stop button for stopping three reels, one at a time, sequentially after each other. Thus if you push the stop button once it will stop the first reel. If you push the stop button again it will then stop the second reel. If you push the stop button again, it will then stop the third reel. It effectively is acting as a single-reel stop button similar to the stop buttons of Takemoto except that the single stop button of Okada acts sequentially on each rotating reel. Further, Okada's stop buttons do not have anything to do with starting of rotation. In Okada, in order to start rotation you have to pull an operating handle.



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Lowden doesn't teach a stop button. Lowden only teaches a spin button. Each player has a spin button. Each player's spin button is enabled by the dealer so that the player can depress his button to spin the reels. Each player's spin button individually spins the reels, but only one spin button can operate at a time. As stated above, there is simply no stop button taught by Lowden.

Hydel is not relevant because Hydel simply teaches a button having a multiple functionalities within a game. Hydel does not teach a start/stop button as claimed but only teaches a button is used in a machine that contains a number of games, particularly a hold/cancel button.

I plan to call you on Thursday at 2:00 p.m. your time so that we can discuss this further.

Sincerely yours,

SEYFARTH SHAW LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G.H.G." followed by a stylized surname.

George H. Gerstman

GHG:ajw